

Shirley Miller interviewed by Bob Short
2008 December 16
Young Harris, GA
Reflections on Georgia Politics
ROGP-061
Original: video, 78 minutes

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Shirley Miller

Date of Transcription: June 29, 2009

BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short, and this is Salute to Georgia's First Ladies sponsored by the Richard B. Russell Library at the University of Georgia. Our guest today is Shirley Miller, the wife of former Georgia Lieutenant Governor, Governor, and United States Senator Zell Miller. Shirley, welcome to our program.

SHIRLEY MILLER: Well, thank you. Thank you, Bob.

SHORT: You grew up in North Carolina...

MILLER: Right. About 30 miles from here and Young Harris in a little cove called Rail Cove out from Andrews, North Carolina.

SHORT: Well, tell us about your early days in Rail Cove.

MILLER: Well, I know now that it was a very, very isolated place. At the time, I didn't know that it was, you know, isolated. I had a younger brother and a younger sister and a great-grandfather who lived with us until his death when I was a child and other neighbors who had kids to play with. So now I know that I was living a very, very isolated existence, but I didn't know it at the time.

SHORT: So you got to Young Harris by coming to Young Harris College?

MILLER: Yes, mhmm, I did.

SHORT: And tell us about your days here.

MILLER: Well, I, like many Young Harris College alumni, just fell in love with the place and still am to this day. It was then, and I think it still is, a very special place that the students who come here either like it very, very much or they don't stay very long. So it's a close-knit community.

SHORT: And it was there that you met your husband?

MILLER: Right. I knew who Zell was from seeing him on the campus, and though he didn't really know me. But the first time that we ever really spent any time together, we ran into each other at a square dance over in Andrews. Zell has liked to tell the story through the years that he asked me if I would like to go, it was early in the evening, if I would like to go with him to another square dance that was going on not too far away.

Of course, my daddy was not standing on the sidelines watching. And so I checked it

out with him, and then I told Zell, well, I've got to take my truck home. Of course, I had to go ask my momma if that was going to be all right with her, too. So Zell had followed me from downtown Andrews up to Rail Cove, and he has told the story through the years that he didn't really know where he was going, following this pick-up truck, and especially when I had to ford a creek to get to the house.

So that was the first time we spent any time together. He knew that I was a student here at the college. And shortly afterwards, he joined the Marine Corps. That was just a month or so, you know, before he joined the Marine Corps.

SHORT: Good. Before we get too far away, tell us about your dad.

MILLER: Well, my dad did some law enforcement work through his life, and he also did a lot of heavy construction work. And that was all done, you know, away from home. He was in the Army, and we lived at Fort Bragg and came back home from Fort Bragg when I was ten years old, you know, when the war was over. It wasn't too long before we came back home, and it wasn't long after that that we had electricity to come to Rail Cove.

And so then we really started farming, and it was a small working hillside Appalachian farm. You know, we had chickens and we had laying eggs to take care of. We had cows and calves and grew corn and tobacco and just the things that you do on a farm. And my daddy kind of knew what we were supposed to do. And when he would be away, if he was away doing

construction work somewhere, my momma carried on. And so that was the kind of life that we lived there, producing, you know, about everything that we needed.

SHORT: He was Sheriff of Cherokee County as I recall...

MILLER: Mhmm. When I was at Young Harris. I was at Young Harris College.

SHORT: So you were introduced to politics at a rather early age?

MILLER: Yes. And even before then, my family, they were always interested in politics and following candidates and working for candidates. And so we were a very politically oriented family.

SHORT: So you had met Zell Miller at Young Harris College, and he joined the Marines?

MILLER: Right, mhmm.

SHORT: It wasn't long after that, was it, that you two were married?

MILLER: We were married, and then, when I graduated from Young Harris College in 1954, we moved to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. So our first years were spent at Camp Lejeune.

SHORT: What was it like being a Marine wife?

MILLER: Well, by the time I was a Marine wife, the Korean War was over. And so that was a great relief, that Zell would not be going to Korea, like we had thought was going to happen earlier. And so until our first child came along, which Murphy was born while Zell was in the Marine Corps and then Matt, our second child, was born the month that he got out of the Marine Corps. And so before we had a child, I worked and knew a lot of, you know, Marine wives that became friends. And we lived right outside the main gate to the base in a place called Midway Park.

SHORT: And then came to the University of Georgia.

MILLER: Right. We moved to Athens just a few weeks before Zell was scheduled to get out of the Marine Corps because Matt was going to come along pretty soon and, as it turned out, Matt was born the same month that Zell got out of the Marine Corps. So we were in Athens then from August of 1956 to 1959. And Zell went to school and he worked and he tutored

football players, and then later he had a teaching assistantship. And I took care of babies and typed papers for other students while we were in Athens but loved being in Athens. Just, you know, loved it, and still do, just still do just love going to Athens. It was a great place to live.

SHORT: So following his graduation, he came back to Young Harris?

MILLER: Yes. He had received his Masters Degree and then the president of Young Harris College offered him a history teaching position at the college in, I guess the fall of 1959. And so we came back and moved into a house on the campus.

SHORT: And that was when he was mayor?

MILLER: He was mayor, yes. He was mayor soon thereafter he was mayor of Young Harris.

SHORT: And then along about 1960 he decided to run for the State Senate?

MILLER: Right, he did.

SHORT: And I know you remember that campaign.

MILLER: Oh, yes. I guess you always have very, very clear memories of the first one, well, of all of them but especially of that one. And he was elected on April the 30th. I remember the date. It was an early primary of that year. I think Dr. Clegg had given him, who was president of Young Harris College, had given him permission to run for the Senate. And the deal was that he would teach a heavier load fall quarter and spring quarter and also teach summer school so he could be gone during the winter to serve in the legislature, which he did.

And when we first came home, I worked for a while for the town's County Board of Education, and then I went to work at the Bank of Hiawassee. And I fell in love with being a worker in a bank. And...

SHORT: You had quite a banking career. Let's talk about that for a minute.

MILLER: Well, after Zell served two terms in the State Senate, he ran for congress and didn't win. And so he worked for three governors in a row. He worked for Governor Sanders; he worked for Governor Maddox; he worked for President Carter. And so at the time that he was working for Governor Maddox, the boys, Murphy and Matt, were about ready to go to high school. And so we made the decision that they would go to school in Atlanta so that they would be where they would see their dad, not just on the weekends but all the time. And so we went to Atlanta. And I began working at what was then CNS Bank, which is of course a part of Nations

Bank now. And my first place of work was the bank in Buckhead. And I went there and went into the loan teller department.

And so I was there for a good while, and then I was the head teller at that bank. And so I really enjoyed doing the work. And of course, the kids were growing up. And the folks at the bank were very, very good to me. Every time I would say, you know, that "I need to work fewer hours so I can do this carpool" and so, you know, the answer was, "Well, go drive your carpools and come back." And so that's what I did.

And then after I had been there for a while, I was asked to go over to Decatur with another person who was working at Buckhead and a couple of more people. So four of us went over to Downtown Decatur to start a – the bank had been granted a national bank charter to start a bank in Decatur. And that was quite an experience, going from Buckhead, where you worked from "can to can't" every day and it was just a very, very intense work atmosphere with lots and lots of people all day long every day. You know, starting from scratch in Decatur, which was a wonderful atmosphere because some of the stores closed for lunch. Some of the businesses closed for lunch, and it was just a very wonderful -- the business community was so cohesive there, and everybody knew each other. And it sort of had a small town atmosphere. So it was a good place to be.

So I was there in a temporary building, and then we were in our new quarters right off the square. And the bank was up and going, and so they asked me how would I like to go over to Cheshire Bridge and work at a bank that had not been open very long but kind of help to grow

that bank. And of course, that was a completely different atmosphere, being in what was a very old, established neighborhood, along with the Junior Varsity and Happy Herman's and other restaurants and food, you know that area. And so we were never hungry at the Cheshire Bridge branch as far as the bank because so many of our customers were in the retail food business. And so we did very well.

But by the time that Zell was running for and elected lieutenant governor, they had once again told me that they'd like for me to go back to Buckhead. And so I was back at Buckhead doing the first lieutenant governor's campaign.

SHORT: Let's talk about that campaign for a minute. Were you very active in that campaign?

MILLER: Well, as active as I could be, you know, Zell, was not working and I was. But I have memories of the New Year's Eve of that campaign year, that we were in Underground Atlanta handing out cards on New Year's Eve that first lieutenant governor's campaign.

SHORT: When he was elected lieutenant governor, did you continue to work while he served as lieutenant governor?

MILLER: I worked for a while, a little while. And, you know, Zell's mother became

sick. And so I had some other kinds of responsibilities that I needed to see about. And as you know, this house that we're in right now is the house that Zell's momma built when he was an infant, shortly after his daddy died. And we've been here for now almost 50 years.

It became apparent to me that I needed more flexibility than I could have being a banker. It wasn't fair to my customer; it wasn't fair to the bank; it wasn't fair to me and the family, that it was just not something that I could do, to be a banker. You know, when you come in to close a loan or do some banking business, you expect your banker to be there, not your stack of paperwork on somebody else's desk. And so I left the bank. And for a period of years, I did some retail clothing stores. I had one in Hiawassee and Norcross and one on the Buford Highway. And that was something that gave me a lot of flexibility in my time, that I didn't have to be there. If I needed to be in Young Harris, I could be here. And then in the early 1980s, I started helping organize a bank in Hiawassee, which we opened in 1984, and I worked there until shortly before Zell was inaugurated governor. And I mean shortly, right? I left at the first of the year before the inauguration.

SHORT: And he was lieutenant governor for 16 years?

MILLER: Uh-huh.

SHORT: I'm sure that will always be a record.

MILLER: Well, he enjoyed that. You know, he enjoyed the legislative process very much.

SHORT: After that period of time that --

MILLER: Of course, the boys grew up during that period of time that he was lieutenant governor. And of course, Murphy went to Emory and then to law school, and Matt graduated from the University of Georgia. So the boys grew up during the lieutenant governor years.

SHORT: And then the big event was his race for governor.

MILLER: Yes, mhmm.

SHORT: I know you two are very close. Was there much discussion about that decision?

MILLER: There was some discussion about it that went on over a period of years. You know that old saying that "timing is everything in politics." And I think that we both thought that the timing was right if he was ever going to run for that, that that was the time.

SHORT: So he's elected and you move into the governor's mansion. Tell us about life in the governor's mansion.

MILLER: Well, it's hard. Living in the governor's mansion was new, but the area of the city was not new to me because I had worked in Buckhead for such a long time. You know, I knew doctors, I knew dentists, I knew the pharmacists, the dry cleaners, the grocery stores. And so it was not a strange environment to me. But I guess we did the normal traditional things that had been going on at the mansion, the public tours and the other events. And then the rest of what we did pretty much revolved around the administration's agenda, which Zell's, it was a very ambitious agenda. He had run with several different things that he really wanted to accomplish. And of course, the beginning part of that would have to be the emphasis on education and improving education. And he had conceived of, you know, HOPE was his baby. He planned how it was going to work, and he named it. And so the HOPE Scholarship and the Pre-K was at the very top of the administration's agenda. And so early on, in fact, in his first day at the State, and we had talked about it a lot beforehand, that where I would fit into that work, that I wanted to work with adult literacy. It was something that had touched me through the years because when I was young and working, I would run into people and people that I just knew could not write and could not read. But then I found the same thing in the different locations where I worked in Atlanta. I had customers that you know, maybe had been with me for a long time. And all of a sudden, I would say, "you know, initial the line where it says so-and-so" and then

I'd get this blank stare. And then I would realize he or she can't read; they don't know where that line, they can't find that line because they can't read it.

So it was something that had – you know, so I would have to point it out. And I would always try to mark everything with little tabs where I would need initials. But sometimes I didn't have time to do that. And so it was something that had really touched me, and I realized that it was not just the area that I came from but that it was a universal problem of people not being able to read. So Zell signed me on in his first State of the State to work on adult literacy. And so that was my niche, and I did it for eight years. And very few days at the mansion I did not spend some of my time working on adult literacy.

SHORT: How did you organize that? Was it through the school system? The object was to get a GED?

MILLER: A GED. And see, HOPE, and I think even to this day the piece of HOPE that applies to technical schools is not widely known as the scholarship part of it. But it's certainly as meaningful I think because HOPE pays the tuition for students in the technical colleges that are working on a certificate or a licensing program. And then of course the GED part is – and that's who was in charge of adult education, is the department that manages the technical institutions. And when a person would receive their GED, they would get a \$500 HOPE voucher that they could use to further their education, to go into a job skill learning program.

And of course, working with adult literacy was just lots of times just the greatest because there's nothing like a GED graduation. So many times the people receiving their GED were maybe the first person in a family who'd ever finished high school. And so extended families came, and they were always very happy, happy events.

So I did as many of them as I could, the graduation ceremonies, you know, all over the state, just as many as I could. And former chancellor of the university system, Vernon Crawford, had had a lifetime interest in literacy. And he had put together, along with help from especially Gene Bowen over at the University of Georgia, a program called the Certified Literate Community Program. And that is a program ongoing to this day where a community, a county will make a commitment to reach the point that they are a literate community. And now I believe there are 21 counties who have received the status of being a Certified Literate Community Program, have gone through the whole process and they meet the criteria that they are a literate community and one city. And there' participating communities/counties now statewide. There's 53 that are still in the process and one city. So pushing this program and getting counties to sign on, getting county commissioners and the county school boards to agree to participate in the Certified Literate Community Program was a part of what I did. And it has been so successful, and I'm not sure of the statistics, that I'm exactly right, but I think the number of annual GEDs went at that time from somewhere in the neighborhood of 13,000 to about 20,000 per year. And between 1990 and 1998, when Zell left office, there had been over 150,000 GEDs granted statewide during that time.

SHORT: This might surprise you, but I looked it up and it's 199,000.

MILLER: Oh, is it that high? Okay.

SHORT: According to the latest figures that I could find. And that's quite an accomplishment.

MILLER: Well, I guess I remember maybe the latest figures that we had at the time, you know, along about that time. So that's great. That's great. It almost hit that 200,000 mark.

SHORT: You also did work with mental health and cancer.

MILLER: Yes.

SHORT: And as a matter of fact, President Carter put you on a national committee on mental retardation.

MILLER: Yes. I served in the Carter Administration on the President's mission on mental retardation. And that work, that was during Zell's lieutenant governor days I guess. And part of the time I wasn't working at the bank, I had already left when I worked on that. But it was

with members from all over the country. And mostly our duty was to examine programs that were working, in what states were various programs working, and to try to encourage other states to adopt what was working in particular states. And then we had some trips and meetings in places that were having problems. At that time, one of the big problems was up in Poughkeepsie, New York, and we went there and stayed and listened to the city fathers tell us about the problems that they were having with sort of a lot of people who had, with the new medications that were available, who had been able to leave institutions but had no place to go. And so we worked on those kinds of problems during that time.

SHORT: Back to life at the mansion, give us a typical day as First Lady.

MILLER: Well, with what I was doing with literacy and other things you know, you mentioned one of the things that is ongoing now, that every time I see a commercial I'm very, very proud of, is I worked with Jean Young, Andy Young's wife Jean, to help get started the Buddy Check II Program for breast cancer. And it's still ongoing. You know, you see commercials on having a buddy and breast self-examination that I worked on with Jean.

But a typical day would be, you know, Zell getting up, gone to work. So it usually started pretty early. I was very, very fortunate when we went to Atlanta that Beverly Messer, who had been with me at the bank in Hiawassee from the very beginning of the organizing of the bank, went with us to Atlanta. And so she was always to work early. And so Bev and I would work early

in the morning in an office that we shared on what we had to do and what was coming up. And then if it was a public tour day, then we had the morning with the volunteers coming in to do the public tours. And then after they were over, I usually tried to get together the mansion staff folks at lunch. And we would talk about what we needed to do and what we had coming up that we were planning for and spend a while putting that together.

And lots of times in the afternoons we would have groups of elderly folks come, sometimes handicapped folks, and sometimes groups of children – who had handicapped children – to come to have a tour of the mansion. And then it would be dependent on whether we had an event that night or not, how long the day was and how busy it was.

We did a lot. We tried to support, you know, the business community and the arts community, the different parts of the Woodruff Arts Center, and I was very interested in that and worked and served on that board while we were in Atlanta. So we did things for the museum and for the symphony and then for organizations around the state that we could in that area. But then a lot of the events were tied to the administration's agenda because Zell wanted to work on the education project. And then of course, another big piece was he wanted to make the state safer with the two strikes law.

And then the one that we were really involved in was the economic development part of it. And so a lot of the events that we had had to do with promoting Georgia, both within and without and outside. And this required a lot of work, a lot of travel. It was a very fortunate time for us though because, you know, Zell has this belief that if he could get this person or these people

who were considering locating in Georgia or expanding in Georgia, if he could sit down with them and look them in the eye, that he could convince them that Georgia was the place to come. And so there was a lot of effort put in that area. And I think as best I remember, the job creation over the administration was like 620,000. So that averaged creating 2,000 jobs a week during that period of time. So that was a big piece of the administration's agenda. And then he wanted to set aside natural areas. So we had two programs: first we had Preservation 2000 going on, which was to set aside 100,000 acres of land that would be preserved for future generations to use. And then after that came the River Care Program. And so that was another area that we were working on very diligently during that time.

SHORT: You were First Lady during the Olympics. I bet that was a busy time.

MILLER: Sometimes I think back that the Olympics ate us up for about 18 months. The planning and the preparation for the Olympics was very, very time consuming because we had responsibility for, I felt like, doing everything right. And so these people, the IOC, the Olympic Committee -- things were going on about the Olympics with us long before the Olympics began. And of course, the Olympic Committee people were from all over the world. And so the care and the planning that we had to do in order to serve the right food, not serve anything that was not acceptable in their country, took a lot of care and planning and then the preparation to get it right, to do that. Of course, we had support from the state department, and we had wonderful

support from the Coca-Cola Company because the Coca-Cola Company operates all over the world. And so they had people who knew the protocol and what we should do. So we had them right there in town and they were very willing to help us to get ready.

But the mansion being located where it is, we could not have trash pick-up during the Olympics. And we couldn't have deliveries of the normal truckloads of food coming into that area of the city because, you know, the security was very, very tight. So we borrowed the refrigerated parts of tractor trailers and parked them, and we had food stored in them prior to the Olympics, that we were going to use during that time. And I think we had tents up for six weeks with the Olympics and the Special Olympics afterwards. And so, as soon as we emptied a refrigerated trailer, then we had a place to store the garbage until it was over. That, I guess was a real 'amuse-me' incident during that time.

At the beginning, we knew that the Clinton family was coming and would be there. But we didn't know that a lot of the cabinet would be there at the beginning of the Olympics. So we didn't quite have the number right on who we were expected to see for the beginning ceremony night. And so many of the cabinet members came that day as well, and most of them brought clothes to go to the events that night. And so we didn't have enough food there to feed all of these people supper, and it was getting close to suppertime. And the building authority people, the folks who operate the cafeterias and the restaurants for the Capitol normally, they were the folks who prepared the food for all the security people that had been brought in from all over the state to help with Olympic security.

So I called the folks down at the building authority and said "What have you got that you can spare for us?" And so they told me what they had that they were sure that they had plenty of that we could have some of, and so that's what we served the members of the cabinet. That's what we served for dinner that night. So the President's cabinet had the same dinner that the security folks had that night. And of course, many of them had brought business attire to wear and it had been a hot day and they had been busy all day. And so we're sort of allocating where different folks could take a shower in the house. And then all of a sudden I realized "We don't have this many towels." I called out to the troopers' barracks and said, "I need to borrow every dry towel you have." And so in just a few minutes, I saw this laundry cart coming across the driveway with towels. And so I took them to the elevator, and I handed out the troopers' towels to the cabinet so they could take a shower before they went down to the events.

SHORT: Did you and Bev handle all this or did you get a little extra staff during the Olympics?

MILLER: Our volunteers really helped. I mean, they went way beyond the call of duty to help us during the Olympics. And so did Zell's staff from down at the Capitol. They came out, and they helped us, all of them that didn't have other responsibilities that they had to do. They came and helped us. And of course, that wasn't the only time that we called on them to come out and give us a hand. But they really did help us during the Olympics. And of course, being there when this President was there, they were folks that their Social Security numbers had already

been run through – the Secret Service had already run their Social Security numbers because they had been there to help us with events previously. And so that's who helped us.

SHORT: How do you treat a sitting President when he's your guest? Do you just sit around and shoot the bull or do you take him places or play him country music?

MILLER: Well, of course President Clinton had visited us before he became President so Zell stayed up with him. You know, he's a night owl. And so Zell would stay up and talk to him. And I guess the first time he came, he came after he was elected President, he was on his way to South America. So he brought quite a group with him at that time that would go on with him on that trip.

SHORT: And they stayed at the mansion also?

MILLER: Well, yes, they stayed there. They stayed there, the doctor, the military people and, of course, they put in their phone lines and all that. It's quite a production to get ready to have a President stay with you because of the way the house sits with the windows upstairs across the guestroom, the Presidential suite and the Carter Bedroom and the aide's room being across the front of the house. So they have to bring in these huge pieces of bullet-proof glass to put behind the windows. So getting ready for them to come is quite a production. And of course, they

bring the dogs to go through everything and all that.

But the first time that he was there after being President, a Navy cook came with him. He brought all of these pans, and they were going to cook. And they brought all this food, and the pantry was full of all of their stuff. And then the President comes down and says, "What's Eva cooking? I'm gonna eat what Eva's cooking." And so none of what they had brought with them ever came out of the pantry. And the Navy cook visited and I think learned how to cook some southern food.

SHORT: How did you deal with security? Did you feel like you were pinched in or did you feel comfortable or safe? When you went shopping, for example?

MILLER: Well, I felt fine with them. I mean, I didn't have any problem with them. A lot of times when I would go out shopping or go out, I would especially be out and about with grandchildren visiting, and I would take them along. And so, you know, I felt just fine with them. They were always, you know, very, very helpful, and I got along very well with all of them.

SHORT: Well, Governor Miller finishes his second term, and he comes back to Young Harris. I bet he didn't stay all that long.

MILLER: No, no. You know, I think we came back home pretty much feeling like that he had accomplished what he set out to do as governor. One of the things that he had wanted to do when he was lieutenant governor and had not been able to and ended up close to the end of the governor's term was able to do was to take the state sales tax, off groceries. And so we came home pretty much having gone through the list of objectives, pretty well having addressed them. So he immediately started teaching at Emory. He did some teaching over at the University of Georgia. He taught some here at Young Harris College. And so we were pretty well settled, and I was still unpacking from all of those many years and going through and sorting things, especially things that we had not sent to the Russell Library. And then, you know, unfortunately, Senator Coverdell's death in July of 2000.

And when Governor Barnes came up and talked to Zell about going to the Senate, and he went out the door and said to me "I don't have a Plan B." So we talked about it. And then at breakfast I said to Zell, "Well, isn't this what you do? Isn't this what you do?" And so he called Governor Barnes and accepted the appointment. And then of course we had a race, an election through November, shortly thereafter.

SHORT: And you're by his side the entire time.

MILLER: So he said initially to me that, you know, "I'm not going to do that partisan stuff in Washington." And I knew that that he was not going to do that because, you know, he believes,

and so do I, that there's a time to run and then there's a time to serve. And after the election is over, until it's time for another one, that you've been elected to be of service to your home folks. And so we went off to Washington and were very fortunate to find a place to live up on Capitol Hill, just right across the street from Zell's office. So this was really the first time in his political career where I had followed what was going on a daily basis because I was right there. And I guess to think about our time in Washington, I'd have to give you just a little bit of background about Zell's friendship with President Bush. The state government passed what they call the new governors school that happens within, you know, the second week after you're elected governor that they have somewhere. And they ask people to be faculty. They ask sitting governors and their spouses to be faculty for the new governors' school. So they had asked us to be faculty for the new governors' school when President Bush was elected governor of Texas. And at that time, Zell and the President, they just kind of hit it off. You know, Zell is a walking encyclopedia of baseball, stories and statistics; he loved it, and he follows it all season. And so he found with the President they sort of became close friends through having mutual interests.

Before he was sworn in as President, the President had asked Zell to come out to Austin and talk to him about education. And of course he was knowledgeable about what had happened in Georgia in education during Zell's administration. And so they became close friends. And out of that friendship, and Zell's belief in cutting taxes, of course, you know, he had two other tax cuts during his administration that were significant in addition to the tax off of groceries. So

Zell became the coauthor of the Bush tax cuts.

SHORT: Tell us if you will a little bit about the social life of a senator and his wife in Washington.

MILLER: Well, I think one of the surprising things to me about the Senate was that there is a whole lot less social life than you normally think is going to happen there. The work day at the Senate is, I think, very different than the perception of it in that a lot of time during the day is spent in committees. And so they actually get down to the legislative work pretty late in the day and many times work late into the evening. And so a lot of times they will not adjourn until 9:00. People who watch C-SPAN too know that, 9:00, 11:00 they'll be voting, you know, long into the evening. And many times if there were some delegations in Georgia, someone would take Zell to the front of wherever the event was taking place. He would go in and say a few words, come back out and get in the car and go back to the office. And I guess I, like many Americans I think, probably think that there's a lot of socializing in Washington for the members, but it's certainly not on the Senate side and I don't think on the House side either. The Senate wives have been a chapter of the American Red Cross for a long time, a very long time. And every Tuesday the Senate wives get together and have lunch, all those who want to. And the business of the lunch is working on something for the Red Cross. And that mostly is blood drives. There are a lot of young, healthy people on Capitol Hill that you can have very,

very successful American Red Cross blood drives. And all of the wives, all you have to do is to recruit them and make them some cookies and then go help with the blood drives on the days that you have them. And so that happens every Tuesday.

And then in the afternoon, the Senate chaplain meets with all the Senate wives who want to meet with him and have a bible study, kind of an afternoon session with him. And I attended that.

There were other Senate wives there on both sides of the aisle whose husbands had been governors at the same time that Zell was that we had know through the years. So there were some people, wives, that I already knew very well and had for a number of years.

And then I was also a member of one of the international clubs, which they have a long history as well. And these are organizations of wives from the diplomatic corps, some wives whose husbands have been in politics in other administrations who are still there, members of congress, the House and the Senate wives. And we would have lunches. And if we went to an embassy, you know, there would be a lot of detail about the country that the members were from. And then there were a few business wives in Washington who part of those groups. So I found those to be very enjoyable, and plus learning a lot from those meetings.

SHORT: Did you and Senator Miller associate much with other senators and their wives socially?

MILLER: Not a whole lot because there's just no time to do it. We spent more time I guess

socially with other senators and wives when we went on a trip. One time we went on a trip with a group to Mexico, and we spent time with them. Then we went on a trip to Normandy for the 60th anniversary of D-Day with a group. And so we spent more time with them socially on trips. But, of course, you really do it on a daily basis because you never what wives and husbands are going to be having lunch together. And then you run into people at the Capitol and spend some time. So you spend enough time that you know a good bit about the families and what's going on there. But I think wives spend more time together without the husbands because it is a heavy, heavy workload that the members of the Senate do.

SHORT: A lot of travel involved in being a United States Senator?

MILLER: Not the kind of travel like being a governor. You know, we did a little bit. And of course, Zell and Jim Bunning made a trip to Iraq, no wives. They made a trip, Senator Jim Bunning from Kentucky and Zell went to Iraq on a trip. Of course, wives didn't go on that. But it wasn't the kind of travel that I was used to as being a governor's wife, where we would do an economic Department of Industry and Trade travel trip every spring, a long trip to Europe in the spring and a trip to the Far East in the fall during all those governor years.

SHORT: But there is a lot of travel back and forth between –

MILLER: Oh, between home and – yes. And it seems like everybody does it. The only wives that I knew that didn't do a lot of traveling were those with small children, young enough children that they were still taking care of kids in Washington.

SHORT: But you and Zell traveled a good bit?

MILLER: Yes.

SHORT: Almost every weekend?

MILLER: Almost every weekend. And that's pretty much standard, especially for people on the east coast; and, amazingly, for us it was very, very easy. You left Washington, and you came to Atlanta, and then you got in a car and you came home. But many members would have to, you know, change planes somewhere and then have a lot longer distances to go from wherever they left an airplane to where they lived than we did and still did a lot of traveling.

SHORT: Did you enjoy your time in Washington?

MILLER: Yes, I did. I think that it was just something to – of course, everything was pretty – we didn't keep a car there because there wasn't anywhere to put a car. And so I had a little

grocery basket that I would take to the dry cleaners and to the grocery store and around the neighborhood. And so when I would start back to the apartment, there's just something about seeing that Capitol dome that is just, you know, when you realize -- you think about the country. And, you know, seeing the Washington Monument lit up at night or going by and seeing the Jefferson Monument or the President Lincoln, the FDR Memorial, it's just -- when we would have friends or family that would be there, that I would be showing them around and going to the Library of Congress and showing them the room that has Thomas Jefferson's library in it, those things I found it to be very, very heartwarming and makes you proud to be an American.

SHORT: Do you regret Senator Miller's decision not to run in the next election?

MILLER: No, I did not. I think we were both ready to come home.

SHORT: Speak to us a little bit about his being an author.

MILLER: Well, I guess I can't really leave the Washington part of our lives without just saying a word or two about his speech at the Republican National Convention because they had asked him to speak at the convention. And initially, he did not know that it was going to be the keynote. And so he had written out, you know, and of course, that goes to the author part, too. He had written a speech and then later they told him that they wanted his speech to be the

keynote. And the day of the keynote, he was of course still working on it. And then realizing that the Vice President was going to come after him, he didn't want to get into any of his time because the networks would cut it off if the Vice President didn't have all of the time that he was supposed to have.

So Zell was still cutting on that speech, you know, just a few minutes before he went on the podium to deliver it. So he was still chopping on it. And initially, he was afraid that what he had left of the speech was not a speech that was going to be helpful to President Bush. But after we had been home a day or two and we were hearing back from people on their campaign trail, telling how well whenever it was mentioned out on the trail that it was being received, that those fears left.

But he did do two books shortly thereafter, *A National Party No More* and *A Death to the Decency*, which both of them were very well received.

SHORT: Best sellers.

MILLER: Both of them were on the *New York Times'* Best Seller List. But, of course, Zell has always written. He wrote whenever we first met. He writes. He always has. He has always written all the time. Even now he comes in from walking Gus, and sometimes he hasn't carried paper and pencil with him and he'll come in and I can tell when he comes in the back door that he's looking for a piece of paper and a pencil to write down whatever he has on his mind that he

wants to put on paper.

SHORT: Well, we might mention he also keynoted the Democratic Convention. It was a good speech.

MILLER: In 1992.

SHORT: Right. And that was well received also.

MILLER: But I guess he's the only person who has keynoted both. I think now Senator Lieberman has spoken at both. But I guess Zell is the only person who has keynoted both the Democratic and the Republican National Conventions.

SHORT: Looking back over your husband's career, what has made you most proud?

MILLER: Well, there are several things that I think that have been really important contributions, but I think probably the HOPE Scholarship. Not too long ago we went down to Georgia State University to take part in the celebration of the millionth HOPE Scholarship that has been granted. So I would have to say that probably what the HOPE Scholarship has meant has been the thing that I have been most proud of. And of course now Zell is one of three

Georgians who has been elected both Governor and United States Senator. And I think that personally, that is really quite an honor. And of course, I realize that that would not have been possible if it were not for the men and women, the very able, productive, men and women who have worked for him and with him over this long political career. And of course, they're just like extended family to us. We keep track of their careers. We like to hear from them, like to know about what's going on with their families. And they really deserve a lot of the credit for things that he was able to accomplish in political office.

And then our families have always been supportive, you know, our boys helping with campaigns when they could. And we've just been so richly blessed. Matt and Katie live here, and so does Murphy and Susan and the four grandchildren: Asia and Justin and Andrew and Brian. And now of our six great-grandchildren, Asia has four. She has Jacob and Joshua, Mary-Elizabeth, and baby Braylen. And Justin has two: Jasmine and Jordan. And Andrew is a sophomore at Augusta State University in Augusta, and Brian is a sophomore here at Young Harris College. And so the good Lord has been very, very good to the Millers and has blessed us with a wonderful family and all of these good folks that have helped Zell during his political career.

SHORT: Turtle on a fence posts.

MILLER: He didn't get there by itself.

SHORT: That's right. I guess he'll always be known for that. I'd like to add though that Murphy is now a Superior Court judge...

MILLER: Right.

SHORT: And doing well I hear.

MILLER: He has an older circuit, which is Towns, Union, White, and Lumpkin County.

SHORT: And Matt is a banker?

MILLER: Yes, he is.

SHORT: So both of your boys are successful also. Well, Shirley Miller, it's been a great pleasure talking with you.

MILLER: Well, thank you for coming to Young Harris.

SHORT: And I would like to thank you on behalf of the Russell Library at the University of Georgia and myself for being our guest.

MILLER: Thank you.

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27

Page PAGE

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